

tree." And this year, thousands of Virginians—from all ages and from all across the Commonwealth—have extended the right hand of friendship to their fellow Americans by providing this great tree for display in our Nation's capital.

At five o'clock on the evening of December 9, the Speaker of the House of Representatives will mark the official beginning of America's holiday season by lighting 10,000 small lights on a 79-year-old Virginia red spruce that, until last month, stood as one of Virginia's finest. Without question, it has lived through a remarkable period in our Nation's history.

That flip of a switch will culminate over a year of activity by ordinary Virginians, park rangers, State officials, schoolchildren and countless others in selecting, preparing and decorating this wonderful, 82-foot tree from Warm Springs Ranger District of the George Washington National Forest in Highland County.

All Virginians rightfully take pride that this 7,500 pound tree will remain lit each evening on the National Mall until the 2nd of January, welcoming the Christmas and Holiday season for citizens across this great land. Since the day last month that the tree was airlifted from its place in the George Washington National Forest, Virginians from every corner of the Commonwealth have played a part in getting this wonderful tree ready for primetime. Beginning on November 13, the spruce visited 33 communities in our State on its way to the National Mall: Monterey, Winchester, Leesburg, Culpeper, King George County, Westmoreland County, Henrico County, Petersburg, Charles City, Hampton, Onancock, Cape Charles, Virginia Beach, Norfolk, Suffolk, Emporia, South Boston, Chatham, Damascus, Smyth County/Marion, Wise, Tazewell, Wytheville, Clifton Forge, New Market, Staunton, New Castle, Roanoke, Orange, Amherst, Farmville, Manassas, Alexandria, and Vienna.

In addition to the thousands of Virginians who greeted the tree on its way to Washington, thousands of other school children, scouts, State and Federal officials, police departments, members of 4-H clubs, and citizen volunteers also took part in crafting and preparing some 10,000 original ornaments for the tree. Approximately 5,000 of these will hang on the holiday tree, and the rest will decorate 70 smaller companion trees in the Nation's capital.

As the time-intensive, individual contributions of tens of thousands of Virginians demonstrate, our State is proud to take a lead role this year in welcoming in the Christmas and holiday season for our fellow Americans. On a personal note, one of my longest-serving and hardest-working staff members, Ms. Doriene Steeves, has played a key organizing role in putting together this wonderful event for the benefit of our State and our Nation. I

salute her and those other Virginians whose hard work and creativity have brought this magnificent tree to the Nation's doorstep for all to see and appreciate through the holidays.

#### HONORING TOM BROKAW

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I rise today to publicly honor and recognize one of South Dakota's favorite sons, Tom Brokaw. He has had an extraordinarily successful career as anchor of NBC Nightly News. During his 21-year reign as anchor, NBC moved from the least watched to the most watched network newscast.

Born in Webster, SD, in 1940, Mr. Brokaw attended high school in Yankton, SD, and began his journalism career after graduating from the University of South Dakota in 1962. He was hired by NBC news in 1966.

Throughout his tenure at NBC, Mr. Brokaw has gathered an impressive list of accomplishments. In 1987, he was the first American to interview Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev, and this exclusive one-on-one from the Kremlin earned him the prestigious Alfred I. duPont Award. Mr. Brokaw was also the first American anchor to interview the Dalai Lama and to report on human rights abuses in Tibet. In 1989, Mr. Brokaw was the only anchor at the scene when the Berlin Wall fell, and in 1995 he was the first anchor to report from the site of the Oklahoma City bombing. He was also the first American anchor to interview Russian President Vladimir Putin in 2000. Mr. Brokaw has reported live from war zones in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Kosovo.

Mr. Brokaw is a highly respected political journalist, having covered every American election since 1968. He anchored all of NBC's political coverage from 1984 through 2004, including primaries, national conventions, and election nights. He has also moderated nine primary and general election debates, including the Presidential debates of 1987 and 1991.

In 1997, Mr. Brokaw won his second duPont award for "Why Can't We Live Together," a documentary examining the racial separation within American suburbs. He won his first Peabody award in 1989 for examining American society in his report, "To Be An American," and received another Peabody in 2004 for "Tom Brokaw Reports: A Question of Fairness," which discussed the University of Michigan affirmative action case and the history of affirmative action in the United States. Mr. Brokaw has received seven Emmy awards for reports on China, the 1992 floods in the Midwest, and the 1999 Kosovo conflict, among others.

With his 1998 book "The Greatest Generation," Mr. Brokaw became a best selling author. "The Greatest Generation Speaks," "An Album of Memories," and "A Long Way from Home" subsequently followed. He has also contributed to The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Los Angeles Times, Newsweek, and Time.

Prior to his position as sole anchor for NBC Nightly News, Mr. Brokaw served as Whitehouse Correspondent for NBC from 1973 to 1976, reporting on the Watergate scandal, and from 1976 to 1981 he anchored NBC's "Today."

After 38 years with NBC, Tom and his wife Meredith will be moving on to new challenges. Tom and Meredith have never forgotten their South Dakota roots and have returned home with great frequency. Their generous contributions of time and financial assistance to projects in Yankton, at the University of South Dakota, and throughout our State reflects their wonderful spirit of giving and a commitment to an enhanced quality of life for all South Dakotans. It is with great honor that I share his impressive accomplishments with my colleagues.

#### IN HONOR OF THE ARLES GREENE FAMILY

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I have a few words before we adjourn for the holidays. This isn't the first year that there will be a lot of empty places at our holiday dinner tables. Even if our own table doesn't have a missing spot, we know a neighbor or a friend whose brother, mother, or husband is away fighting to keep us safe at home. These empty places remind us of the generations of men and women who have sacrificed to keep us free so that we can, in freedom, celebrate those holidays that are important to each of us.

Today I rise to honor the service of the family of Arles Greene of Hendersonville, TN. Arles's family has a lot of empty places around their dinner table in the Second World War. Arles's father Eugene W. Greene, his uncle William Edwin McDavid and friend Ed Gallbreath, Jr., all served some 60 years ago.

Ed Galbreath, Jr., a friend of Arles's family, joined the Air Force in February 1944, during his senior year of high school. He flew 23½ missions as a gunman, operated a VHF radio, and worked the radar jammers. He survived four crashes. In his last crash, out of a B-24 Tiger Shark, he landed in Berlin where he was taken prisoner. He spent months in confinement with some 6,000 other prisoners of war until he was liberated by the Russian Army. For his bravery, Sergeant Galbreath received many awards, including the Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters, the Purple Heart, the P.O.W. Medal, and the Parachute Club Medal. His understanding of those prisons shaped his many future contributions to his community of Goodlettsville, TN.

In October of 1943, Arles's uncle, PVT William Edwin McDavid, left Moccasin Gap, Virginia, to serve in the 38th Infantry Division. Private McDavid was just 18 years old when he served in Normandy, the Rhineland, the Ardennes, and northern France. While fighting in the Battle of the Bulge on New Year's Eve of 1944, McDavid suffered frost-bitten hands that ended his infantry